

Message Text

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44

ORIGIN SS-30

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DRAFTED BY AF/W:CLDARIS:IW

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S/PRS: (INFO)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NIAMEY IMMEDIATE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STATE 021221

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SCUL, PINS, NG

SUBJ: PAO RECALL: PRESS GUIDANCE

REF: STATE 20094

1. FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR STATE
SPOKESMAN'S USE ON AN IF-ASKED BASIS. USIA WILL REFER ANY
QUESTIONS ON THIS MATTER TO STATE. BEGIN TEXT:

QUESTION: WHAT IS BEHIND THE EXPULSION OF THE PUBLIC AF-
FAIRS OFFICER FROM NIAMEY?

ANSWER: JAMES MCHALE WAS WITHDRAWN FROM HIS POST IN NIAMEY
AT THE REQUEST OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGER. THE REASON
GIVEN BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT FOR ITS REQUEST WAS THAT THE
GOVERNMENT OF NIGER HAD "LOST CONFIDENCE" IN HIM. THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT STRONGLY DISPUTED THIS REASONING AS UNJUSTIFIED,
BUT IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INSISTENCE THAT HE BE
WITHDRAWN WE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO REMOVE HIM WITHOUT
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PREJUDICE.

QUESTION: WHY DID THE GOVERNMENT LOSE CONFIDENCE IN HIM?

ANSWER: THE MATTER RELATES, IN BOTH CIRCUMSTANCES AND ATMOSPHERE, TO INTERNAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND STUDENT GROUPS. IT WAS CHARGED THAT FACILITIES AT THE US CULTURAL CENTER IN NIAMEY HAD BEEN USED ON OCCASION LAST YEAR TO MIMEOGRAPH ANTI-GOVERNMENT TRACTS. WHILE THIS CHARGE TURNED OUT TO HAVE SOME BASIS IN FACT, THE MISUSE OF US FACILITIES HAD OCCURRED WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAO. WHEN THE UNAUTHORIZED USE OF THE EQUIPMENT WAS DISCOVERED, LAST NOVEMBER, CONTROLS WERE IMMEDIATELY PUT INTO EFFECT TO PREVENT REOCCURRENCE. IN VIEW OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE US FELT THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGER'S REACTION WAS EXAGGERATED AND WE HAVE EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN TO THAT GOVERNMENT OVER ITS DECISION.

QUESTION: HOW WILL THIS AFFECT US/NIGERIEN RELATIONS?

ANSWER: WE STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGER'S ACTION IN THIS CASE, BUT FRIENDS WILL DISAGREE FROM TIME TO TIME AND THE US GOVERNMENT, FOR ITS PART, WILL DO EVERYTHING IT CAN TO MAINTAIN THE LONG-STANDING TIES AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

QUESTION: WILL THIS INCIDENT AFFECT US PROGRAMS IN NIGER?

ANSWER: THE US WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN AIDING THIS, AS WELL AS THE OTHER SEVERELY DROUGHT-STRICKEN NATIONS OF THE SAHEL REGION OF WEST AFRICA. AS TO THE CULTURAL CENTER, THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGER HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT WOULD WELCOME ITS CONTINUATION. END TEXT. KISSINGER

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